Alberta Awaits

Autumn 2007

A newsletter for people interested in moving to Alberta, Canada

Produced by the Government of Alberta - Employment, Immigration and Industry

Alberta's Immigration Portal
New Look. New Information. New Opportunities.

In November 2007 the Government of Alberta launched its new-look immigration portal at www.alberta-canada.com/immigration. Designed to simplify access to information regarding the immigration process, the portal has over 200 new pages of information about immigrating to and settling in Alberta.

Moving to a new country is both exciting and challenging. If you are planning to immigrate, study, or move to Alberta to work – then you have made the right choice! Alberta's Immigration Web Portal is designed to help you find the information you need.

Welcome. Alberta.
The 'Before you arrive' section has information about the immigration process as well as a checklist that can help you plan your settlement in Alberta.

Arrive. Alberta.
'After you arrive' provides information about health care, banking, housing, schools, and training for employment opportunities, as well as a listing of immigrant serving agencies that provide immigrants with permanent residency status and a variety of free support services within the first three years of landing in Canada.

Succeed. Alberta.
If you are looking for job or career opportunities, visit the 'Working in Alberta' section where you will find numerous job opportunities posted by Alberta employers seeking foreign workers.

We understand that it is difficult to leave your own home to embrace a new land and start a new life. Alberta has been built by immigrants and their descendants and we welcome immigrants from the world over to join our communities. Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry works with new immigrants, Alberta employers, immigrant serving agencies, and all Albertans to ensure immigrants and their families' integrate comfortably into their new lives.

We invite you to explore the Alberta Immigration website for information on immigrating, working and studying in our beautiful province – Alberta, Canada!

Have a question? Call the Alberta Foreign Worker Hotline: (780) 427-6419
Or, complete our request for information form at: www.alberta-canada.com/immigration/requestform

Working Temporarily in Alberta

Foreign Workers interested in working in Canada must first have a job offer from a Canadian employer and a Work Permit issued by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). To meet the pressing human resource needs of employers, Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) and Service Canada (SC) have developed Regional Lists of Occupations under Pressure. For occupations found on these lists, employers will not be required to undertake lengthy or comprehensive advertising efforts before being eligible to apply to hire a foreign worker.

This new program introduced to Alberta employers is called the Expedited Labour Market Opinion (E-LMO) Pilot Project. Employers who qualify receive an E-LMO within three to five days of Service Canada receiving their application. If you are interested in coming to Alberta as a temporary foreign worker and are qualified for any of the occupations listed below, you could be on your way to Alberta more quickly than you think. For more information on this pilot project or the full list of Occupations Under Pressure go to: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills and click on "Foreign Workers".

E-LMO Pilot Project Occupations:

Dental Technician
Journeyman/woman Carpenters
Journeyman/woman Crane Operators
Pharmacists
Registered Nurses
Retail Salespersons and Sales Clerks
Food and Beverage Servers
Food Counter Attendants
Hotel and Hospitality Room Attendants
Hotel Front Desk Clerk
Ski/Snowboard Instructors
Tour and Travel Guides

Part of our Culture – Canadians and Ice Hockey

Considered Canada's national sport, hockey is played by men, women and children across the country. It's not uncommon to see an enthusiastic game between friends in Canadian neighborhoods, anytime of the year – played on either pavement or ice. Street hockey or "shinny" provides a glimpse back into the history of the sport, as many of hockey's greatest players learned to play on a backyard rink.

The official game of hockey is played on an ice rink by two opposing teams. Each team consists of a goalie and five skaters who, using bladed sticks, attempt to score by shooting a flat, round rubber puck into their opponents' net.

In Alberta there are over 450 minor hockey associations, with 80,000 youths playing on organized teams. Minor hockey clubs have to reserve ice time a year in advance, and it is not uncommon for families to travel more than an hour to go to a game and watch their kids play.

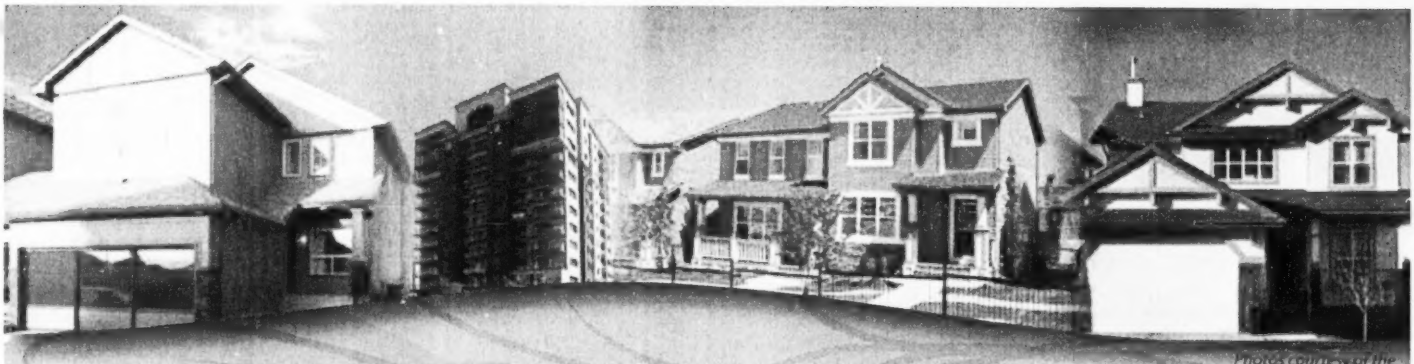
Alberta has its own storied hockey history, with two great National Hockey League (NHL) franchises calling the province home. The Edmonton Oilers and the Calgary Flames have operated successfully since the 1970's, and have won a total of six Stanley Cup league championship trophies. Hockey legends Wayne Gretzky and Mark Messier called Edmonton home for the better part of a decade, and star players Jarome Iginla and Miikka Kiprusoff currently lead a strong Calgary Flames squad.

Whether you are a hockey sports fan or not, there is no escaping the sights and sounds of the game. Daily radio, television and newspaper reports highlight all of the action that occurs in the world of hockey. On any given day during the hockey season, it seems as if your co-workers or the people that you commute with are either thinking or talking about the sport.

The annual hockey season takes place between November and April and it is a period of time that unites all Canadian hockey fans. Whether playing the sport itself or watching matches between national and international hockey teams, Canadian hockey fans definitely live and breathe hockey.

Here are a few hockey expressions that will have you conversing with even the most fanatic of fans:

- "Hanging up his skates" - The player is retiring.
- "Playoff beard" - A tradition where players do not shave, during the playoffs, until they win the championship or get eliminated.
- "The big dance." - Slang for the NHL Stanley Cup final matches.



Photos courtesy of the Canadian Home Builders Association, Alberta

Building a New Home

According to Statistics Canada, "Alberta is in the midst of the strongest period of economic growth ever recorded by any Canadian province."

Employment increased by a net 86,300 full-time positions in 2006, and with this economic boom many people are building new homes – housing starts reached a historic high of 48,962.

If you are planning on moving to Alberta, take the time to become familiar with both the real estate and new home building market. This will ensure that the process, from the purchase transaction through the construction phase of your new home, is a smooth one.

Here a couple of terms you need to know to get started:

Purchase Agreement:
A contract for the sale of a home to be constructed on land it's to be built on. Used if the builder is selling both the home and the lot. The agreement specifies the lot to be acquired and notes details concerning the transfer of title to the Purchaser upon fulfillment of the Purchase Agreement's terms & conditions.

Construction Agreement:
Used if the builder is constructing a new home on land already owned by the Purchaser. It differs from the Purchase Agreement in that it includes clauses that cover access by both the Builder and Purchaser to the construction site on the property to which the Purchaser already holds title.

In both cases, the Agreement is a contract that should specify the Coverage Protections which the Builder provides to you through membership in the Alberta New Home Warranty Program, specifically:

- Deposit Protection
- Builder Performance Protection
- First Year Materials & Workmanship Warranty Protection
- Structural Integrity Warranty Protection

For more information, visit:
www.anhwp.com

Home building terminology courtesy of Alberta New Home Warranty.

HomeBuilders WeBsites

There are many aspects to the process of building a new home; the following websites will help answer the questions you have.

Canadian Home Builders Associations:

Alberta
www.chbaalberta.ca

Calgary Region
www.crhba.com

Central Alberta
www.chbacentralalberta.ca

Edmonton Region
www.chbaedmonton.ca

Grande Prairie Region
www.chbagp.com

Lethbridge Region
www.chbalethbridge.com

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca

Have a Question?

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(780) 427-6419

Or, complete our request for information form at: www.alberta-canada.com/immigration/requestform

Turning Seasons

Autumn is a wonderful time of year in Alberta - the end of the summer lingers over the prairies and Albertans enjoy what is often referred to as Indian Summer – which is a period of mild weather, occurring in late autumn, usually after the first frost. Football, outdoor markets and hiking are in full swing in the fall.

Autumn also brings Daylight Savings Time, when the clocks 'fall back' one hour on Sunday, November 4. The main purpose of Daylight Saving Time is to make better use of daylight.

Here is some advice on how to dress during fall and into winter. Remember even when the weather cools the sun shines in Alberta - Canada's sunniest province!

SEPTEMBER – The days are warm, but the evenings are cool. Light to medium weight summer clothing is recommended. Albertans spend time outdoors enjoying the last days of summer and, at the end of the month, begin preparing their yards and homes for the coming winter season.

OCTOBER – Cool. Medium to heavy weight apparel is advised. The first touch of frost is in the air and the turn of the season is celebrated with the Thanksgiving holiday. It's an excellent time to travel and photograph the beautiful orange and yellow colours of autumn scenery as foliage turns to fall colours.

NOVEMBER - Cool and frosty. Medium to heavy weight apparel is a great choice. The first snowfall to stay usually occurs during this month. Travel at this time is good. Motorists should have cars winterised and install snow tires.

DECEMBER - Winter temperatures with snowfall. A warm winter coat, toque (hat), boots and gloves are needed. Don't let the cooler temperatures scare you! Outdoor winter enthusiasts are busy having fun skating, snowboarding, ice fishing, cross-country and downhill skiing – enjoying sunny Alberta blue sky days!

Holidays and Celebrations

While the following days are recognised by Alberta employers as paid statutory holidays, the observance of individuals' religious holidays and traditions are widely accepted and celebrated.

Thanksgiving, 2nd Monday in October - Before the first Europeans arrived in North America, farmers in Europe held celebrations at harvest to give thanks for their good fortune and abundance of food. The first Thanksgiving Day in Canada after Confederation was observed on April 15, 1872. In 1879, Parliament declared November 6th a national holiday of Thanksgiving. Over the years many dates were observed, and the third Monday in October was the most popular. Finally, on January 31st, 1957, Parliament declared the second Monday in October of each year to be "A Day of General Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the bountiful harvest with which Canada has been blessed". Thanksgiving Day is a statutory holiday in Alberta. Most families celebrate with a special dinner for family and friends, consisting of a roast turkey and pumpkin pie. The holiday provides an opportunity to remember family members who immigrated to Canada and to celebrate the pioneering spirit that helped build the country.

Remembrance Day November 11th - commemorates Canadians who died in the First and Second World Wars and the Korean War. The tradition of wearing poppies honours Canada's war dead, and takes its origin from the poem "In Flanders Fields," written in 1915 by Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae. A Canadian Medical Officer during the First World War, McCrae's poem reflects his first hand account of what he witnessed while working from a dressing station on the bank of the Yser Canal. The poppy is the symbol that individuals use to show they remember those who were killed in the wars and peace keeping operations Canada has been involved in. The Royal Canadian Legion sells replica poppies to raise money for needy veterans.

Christmas Day, December 25th - A Christian holiday celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, Christmas is one of the main religious festivals celebrated in Canada as a statutory holiday. Traditions include decorating with lights, putting up Christmas trees, giving gifts, and sending greeting cards. In Canada, Christmas traditions have come from many countries. The Christmas tree is a German tradition, started as early as 700 A.D. In the 1800s, which then moved to England and eventually to Canada. The Nativity and many old carols can be traced to France. Greeting cards can be traced to England, and the ancient Gaelic custom of putting lights in windows originated in Ireland. Many other religious holidays and ethnic traditions are celebrated with families, friends and colleagues at this time of the year.

Boxing Day , December 26th - Boxing Day was once known as the Feast of St. Stephen (after the first Christian martyr). It originated in England in the middle of the nineteenth century under Queen Victoria as a holiday for members of the merchant class to give boxes containing food, clothing, and/or money to trades people and servants. These gifts were an expression of gratitude similar to the bonuses many employers give their employees today. The gifts, usually given in boxes, gave the holiday its name, "Boxing Day". Boxing Day has become the biggest shopping day of the year in Canada, with retailers offering huge savings on most of their remaining stock following the Christmas holiday shopping season.

New Years Day, January 1st - The celebration of this holiday begins on New Years Eve, when people gather to celebrate. In Alberta, many major cities organize free family events that include live entertainment, crafts for the kids, bonfires and fireworks. At the stroke of midnight people hug and kiss their loved ones, wish each other a happy and prosperous coming year, and cheer and sing "Auld Lang Syne" which means "old long since" or roughly "the good old days". New Year's Day is the oldest universal holiday dating to the first observance by the Romans January 1, 153 B.C.